



THANKS DAD!

by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott

ON FATHER'S DAY, DADS ACROSS TEXAS will be celebrated from the Panhandle to the Rio Grande Valley. It is on this special day that dads receive the praise and thanks they deserve year round for the countless sacrifices they make for their children. Some sacrifices are larger than others, but all are a common part of fatherhood. It is because of these sacrifices that a father holds a special place in his child's heart.

A father's job is an important one and it often is not easy. The employees of the Attorney General's Child Support Division (CSD) extends well wishes and thanks to Texas dads for giving their children the love and support they deserve.

Last year, the CSD collected \$3.6 billion in child support — and most of the money came from fathers. You are the unsung heroes in your children's lives.

The CSD demonstrates its commitment to fathers by recognizing the important and irreplaceable role they play in their children's lives. Several notable resources that serve Texas fathers include:

The **Paternity Opportunity Program (POP)** gives unmarried fathers the opportunity to acknowledge their

children's paternity at the time of birth. The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) trains and certifies hospital and birthing center employees to assist parents with the Acknowledgment of Paternity process so that the child will have a legal father right from the start. Last year, POP gave more than 126,000 Texas children a good start in life by helping their fathers establish legal paternity.

Maps for New Dads: Handbook for Expectant and New Fathers is a publication designed to help expecting dads transition into fatherhood. Maps covers everything from what to expect on a prenatal visit to making homes "baby safe" — all in a manner designed to reinforce the special role fathers play. Additional resources developed by the OAG include posters recognizing the important role fathers play, a Parenting Two-gether Handbook for New Parents and the For Our Children DVD.

Access and Visitation programs promote noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children, when appropriate, through a variety of shared parenting projects. Awarding grant funding to local organizations is one way the Attorney General's Office can help children whose parents are engaged

in custody or visitation disputes, since federal funding to run the child support program cannot be used to handle these issues. The services provided under this grant include early intervention, co-parenting education, mediation and enforcement. The OAG also funds a toll-free assistance hotline, (866) 292-4636, and provides a Web-based directory of services available in Texas communities.

The **Parenting and Paternity Awareness (p.a.p.a.) program** is an innovative educational curriculum designed for secondary school students and young adults. The p.a.p.a. program focuses on the "rights, responsibilities and realities of parenting." Key themes in the curriculum focus on the importance of father involvement, the value of paternity establishment, the legal realities of child support, the financial and emotional challenges of single parenting, the benefits of both parents being involved in a child's life, healthy relationship skills and relationship violence prevention.

Happy Father's Day to the extraordinary fathers who make sacrifices for their children to show them they are loved.

— June 2014

POINTS TO REMEMBER



THE OAG FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

The Office of the Attorney General provides help to fathers seeking to become more financially and emotionally involved in their children's lives.

The OAG Child Support Division helps fathers with:

- child support services
- employer and job training referrals
- establishing paternity for their child
- education about their rights and responsibilities
- information on how to build healthy relationships with their children and the mothers of their children

Call (800) 252-8014 or visit the Attorney General's website at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov to find out more.



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
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